



PORTALS

PURDUE UNIVERSITY NORTH CENTRAL
STUDENT WRITING

Volume 11 Spring 1982

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***PURDUE UNIVERSITY NORTH CENTRAL
STUDENT WRITING***

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Volume 11 Spring 1982

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The idea of a short-term goal in relation to art presents somewhat of a dilemma for artists. A short-term project may only last a few years in relationship to a lifetime spent producing art, but the impact of a single short-term work can follow one and taint everything he or she produces for the rest of the artist's professional life. What Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, a short-term work, means in relation to the rest of her professional career is yet to be seen. For any artist to produce a major work of lasting impact and originality is a goal that few artists achieve in their lifetimes.

Judy Chicago, however, has managed to produce a major work with a great amount of critical acclaim. Her piece, *The Dinner Party*, she introduced in a gallery in Chicago, Illinois, on September 13, 1981. Judy Chicago began in 1974 to create a series of plates commemorating great women in history. The series was originally titled *Twenty-Five Women Who Were Eaten Alive*. The project began to branch out, however, encompassing many women whose existences (real or mythological) had influenced the direction of the cultural development of various societies. Many different art forms, such as ceramics and needlework, usually considered to be chiefly women's or domestic art forms, were utilized in the sculpture.

The finished piece, titled *The Dinner Party*, consists of a large, triangular banquet table, forty-eight feet on each side, with thirty-nine place settings. White tiles set in the center of the structure's floor are signed with about a thousand names of famous women in history. A place setting consists of a plate and a hand-embroidered place mat for each woman represented. The entire work took Judy Chicago's efforts along with those of a crew of artisans and a volunteer force of four-hundred people and several years to complete. The intent, implementation and critical impact from both men and women towards *The Dinner Party* all play a very important role in making the piece a monumental sculpture of lasting importance.

Judy Chicago is a feminist artist who believes that great women in history and culture could be legitimately represented by a feminine interpretation of that history. Up to the twentieth century, most art representing women had been produced by male artists. Judy Chicago set out to define great women in terms of women. Ceramics, needlework, sculpture, and paint were all employed to depict the colorful, butterfly vaginas of women in history. Appropriately enough, Chicago also used objects most women deal with on an everyday basis—plates, tablecloths, silverware, and goblets. She took mundane objects and raised them to the level of art to teach people women's history by using a woman's world.

For example, the conservative poet, Emily Dickinson, is represented by a plate with a very stiff, pink-laced vulva. Georgia O'Keeffe, the artist, is represented by a plate showing bone and flower forms in muted grays and mauves, an artful tribute to O'Keeffe's own colors and illusions. The use of the plates representing vaginas plays an important role in the intent of *The Dinner Party*. By using female symbols and genitalia, Chicago relates the entire work to the woman's world. It is true that few people are comfortable view female genitalia the way that Chicago presents it. To see these vaginas in thirty-nine colorful and exciting forms is a social shock to many people. Chicago celebrates women's bodies in a way that the male-oriented art world has always frowned upon. She turns her plates into abstract symbols of fertility and power, just as penises have been represented in skyscrapers, guns, and rocket ships. Chicago's perspective, however, does not have to be accepted or agreed upon. All she attempts to do is to suggest another look at portions of history and societies through feminine eyes.

The way in which Chicago depicts these great women brings a certain amount of historical perspective to each individual shown. Combined in many of the plates is the story of that particular woman's life. For example, the plate depicting Sojourner Truth shows a range of emotions felt by this black woman as she helped the slaves escape to the safety of the North from the pre-Civil War South. The plate consists of a three sided head: the center face suggests an African mask

of a lioness, another face is weeping and downcast, and the third face is that of a militant fighter whose clenched fist and upraised arm rise from her breast as one image. Saint Bridget's plate is a fiery-orange and green tree of life, which suggests the symbolic union of her politically torn Ireland. These images, among others, help to illustrate the history in which these women participated. When the symbols in the plates are interpreted, viewers can understand that portion of history from the artist's perspective.

Would poet Emily Dickinson discuss birth control with Margaret Sanger? Would author Virginia Woolf debate social ills with Queen Elizabeth? Would lesbian Natalie Barney have her arm around suffragette Susan B. Anthony? The visualizations of such fantasies move the viewers to listen carefully to Chicago's guests as their muted voices begin to mingle. The use of the dinner party as a setting for the sculpture's theme allows the viewers some very interesting fantasies of their own. Imaginary invitation lists can be conjured up in each observer's mind. *The Dinner Party* allows a connective thread to bind the different eras of women together—from Ishtar, the ancient goddess, to the twentieth century artist, Georgia O'Keeffe. Some critics have likened *The Dinner Party* to a sexual Seder for women where the history of women instead of the history of the Jews is kept alive. Other critics have called the work a feminine Last Supper where the sexual organs of women enter a transubstantiation of the flesh into an existence more spiritual, more eternal. If the critics have agreed on anything at all concerning *The Dinner Party*, then, it is that they have agreed to disagree.

Not all the responses to the sculpture are positive. There are problems for the sophisticated feminists. Some of the histories presented are not that well researched. Despite the women that are presented, there are some notable exceptions: Gertrude Stein, Marie Curie, and black anarchist Lucy Parsons are a few heroines who are conspicuous by their absences. Some feminists have claimed that it is just as elitist to celebrate heroines as it is to celebrate heroes. *The Dinner Party*, however, can be considered a success despite the feminists' criticisms because Chicago's intent of reviewing history from a feminine angle does encourage viewers to rethink women's places in history and culture. It would seem that Chicago has anticipated the obvious reactions of her critics.

The furious response of male art critics, however, is another matter. Their response has been vicious and antagonistic in regards to the sculpture. A few of those critiques by male art critics have brought in hundreds of protests from women all over the country. As Rebecca West once wrote to Virginia Woolf on her publishing of *A Room of One's Own*, she claimed that there were two kinds of men who would make such vicious attacks on liberated women: "... those who despise us for our female organs and those who envy us for them. The first," she said, "chastises us with whips, the second chastises us with scorpions." Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* survives both kinds of attacks because women are becoming more steadfastly curious about women artists' perceptions of the female. There is also a certain amount of grandiloquence that can be afforded in this case to Chicago. Whereas some critics contend that the contrivance of the sculpture is too intense, too poignant, there is a great deal of evidence that proves a new work of classical art must be intense, must be poignant to allow artists to pioneer the unexplored terrain of that particular area. Although truly historic works by women artists are few and far between, Judy Chicago has managed to secure her place at the table. She has produced a major work of originality and lasting importance.

A short-term work of art of *The Dinner Party*'s magnitude may complicate the rest of Chicago's career. Such a major early work in any artist's career can leave future projects invisible in its shadow. The long-lasting importance of *The Dinner Party* as a major piece of women's art can jeopardize future works' immediate importance. Judy Chicago may find herself inexorably chained to *The Dinner Party* as Michelangelo was chained to his Sistine Chapel ceiling or Picasso to cubism. What Chicago needs now is some distance between herself and her work. She needs to allow *The Dinner Party* to stand alone on its tour of the United States and Canada. Only then, can objective critiques of the work be considered valid. Only then, can Judy Chicago be judged as an artist connected to history.

—Susan Lichtman

THE TURNING OF A PAGE

A long time ago I was given a book. In that book a philosophy was set forth, which stated simply "... Life is but a short story; unfortunately the pages are turned much too swiftly ..." We begin on the first page, innocent and eager to expand. With Page Two, life is swiftly moving on. As yet, we are protected from the pain of harsh reality by the innocence of youth. Another turn of the page brings us to a time which is crucial to our development, a boy is transformed into a man; a time to form the rest of the story, a chance actually to compose some of the words that up until now have been preprinted. For some, like me, this can happen quickly. It seems as if overnight. For others, it is a process which takes all of the teenage years. Who can say which is better? Not I for I have not been allowed to look ahead in my book.

It was the spring of the year, a time when nature shakes off her snowy white mantle of sleep and is reborn. It was in the spring when my father was taken from us. At the time, it seemed a cruel jest for nature to be giving so much life, while simultaneously so much was being torn from me.

Death, violent death in particular, was a very traumatic experience for me. Love; hate; anger; empathy; confusion; frustration; guilt; all of these emotions and a hundred more, separately, together, one on top of another, each adding its own twist to the raging turmoil which shook my being. Soon, though, this explosion of emotions drained me, mentally and physically. All that I felt was a chilling numbness.

The wake and funeral seemed to pass quickly. I felt as if I were floating in a field of reverse polarity where everyone and everything I would have normally turned to for solace repelled me. After about four weeks, though, I was able to gain some control over my emotions. With the return of this control came the knowledge that I had a duty to perform. Because of my unstable emotional state, I had not been able to say my final goodbyes at the funeral. I knew I must go to my father's grave to complete some final, personal ritual that even I did not understand.

It was a beautiful day in mid-June when a fourteen year old boy for the first time turned a page in his own life, for it was on that day in June I went to my father's grave. I allowed all of the emotions that had very nearly overwhelmed me a month earlier to rise again to the surface. It seemed as if I drew on some external energy source, or maybe it was my father's spirit guiding me as if he were still there. I guess I'll never know. As each of those heart-rending emotions surfaced, I was able to control it, to savor it, to learn from it, and then to marshall it, and force it to remain in my command. I did not let it command me. In doing this I believe some greater knowledge was imparted to me, for all at once I could understand the order of life. As I saw it, some must cease to exist so others could begin to exist. For my father and me, spring had indeed been a rebirth. For him, it was a chance to let his spirit soar, unfettered by any mortal restrictions. His story was over but never to be forgotten. Right then, I closed my father's book forever, and we parted until the day when my book, too, would be closed for the last time.

For me, this was only the turning of one page. Such a bitter pill to swallow, realizing that I would still have more of these traumatic pages to turn. But, with a new determination and this new knowledge firmly implanted in my mind, I bid my father farewell for the last time. I prayed God would have mercy upon his soul. Slowly I turned and walked away. I don't mind telling you I cried. I cried as I've never cried before, or since, as I walked away from that grave. There were two major differences though: one, I was crying with happiness; two, they were the tears of a man.

—Paul Ciesielski

MY CHINA DOLL

From the oval attic window I watched raindrops drip from the sky and sprinkle on the bare earth below. A thin layer of frost sealed the ground and the cold, gray sky foretold winter's approaching silence. Inside, dust covered the stacked boxes and bags of outgrown clothes and toys. I had intended to reorganize this collection of artifacts for some time, and this day appeared to be an excellent opportunity.

For several hours I sorted through box after box, and tried to discard any item which didn't appear to be of vital importance. Eventually the dust settled on the cardboard boxes which line the unfinished, angular walls of the gloomy storage room. Covered with sweat and completely exhausted, I collapsed in Grandpa's aged, high-back chair, which exploded with a cloud of dust upon impact. A tattered cardboard box, which I had overlooked, caught my eye. I blew the dust off the lid and lifted it cautiously, unsure of what to expect. When I saw the contents I recognized it immediately, and a wave of memories washed over me. Inside that dirty, cheap box was my china doll.

When I was ten years old, Mom gave me the most beautiful doll in the world. A delicate, porcelain head rested upon a soft slender body. A full-length, virgin-white satin and lace dress covered the frail body, except for the fragile china hands and the satin slippers adorning her feet. I set her high on my dresser to protect her from possible catastrophes. She was my first thought every morning and in my dreams every night. I tried to imitate her poise and femininity, believing they were the only requirements to a lifetime of happiness and security.

But the doll in the box was not the same one that had captivated my childhood. Her beauty had faded during her imprisonment in that box. Chipped porcelain scarred her once-delicate face, blue dye stained her torn, yellow dress, and a satin slipper was missing from one of her precious feet. Her abused appearance explained that her beauty had not protected her as promised. Along with her beauty she had also lost her poise and femininity, which, according to her teachings, determined the happiness and success of life.

As I grew older, my beautiful china doll grew out of my life. I no longer fantasized about life in an immature way, but lived instead in the real world of opportunities and misfortunes. I still had dreams and expectations for my future, but they became more realistic with age. I learned that physical beauty is not true beauty. True beauty can only come from the inner depths of one's soul and, if legitimate, will radiate from that person in the expression of the genuine love he feels for others.

Life is a complicated structure; thus many variables will determine its success or failure. Physical beauty is a wonderful gift to be blessed with and it may provide a few extra opportunities, but it alone cannot determine success. Many other factors, especially those instilled during childhood, intertwine to produce a functioning human being, hopefully a credit to society. Physical beauty is meaningless unless inner beauty is also present. It alone will not endure, just as a china doll's beauty and importance fades with the passage of time.

—Debbie Behrndt

MAKING AN ANALOGY
OR
PANTY-LINES CAN BE ATTRACTIVE

An analogy is like a girdle; they never quite fit. When you buy a girdle, you buy an attractive one. You see immediately that it has two holes for your feet to fit through. You don't consider at your initial purchase just what happens once you pull it up north of the knees. The same things apply when you choose an analogy. You choose one that's going to make you look good, but analogies are going to give you panty-lines every time.

Love and roses, worlds and stages,—and pigs and chauvinists are all common analogies, and they were all chosen to make the author look good. Your choice of analogy makes you seem intelligent or poetic to your readers. That is vanity. Vanity is the reason a person would stuff herself into a girdle. A person without vanity would never go through the discomfort of a girdle or pick a poetic analogy even if it did flatter her.

You will see immediately some similarities in your analogy. "All the world's a stage"² has possibilities, but go ahead and try to get five paragraphs out of it. The words in your analogy will have some things in common, of course, and you will use them right away because you must in order to get your ideas across. "And all the men and women merely players,..."³ was easy to think up. After all, a girdle will slide easily over your calves, but it is a struggle after that. When you have to expand your analogy you realize how uncomfortable the fit can be. Similarly, a girdle will be uncomfortable when you expand it.

When you get to the point past the knees, there is going to be some struggling. It is necessary to twist and turn as you pull the girdle up. You will get white knuckles and a red face. When it's on, you realize there is the fat you've tried to hide, hanging over the top of the girdle. The solution to that problem is to pull the girdle up higher. You discover then that the garters and the rest of the cotton-lined crotch is up your fanny. Now you pull it down to where it's bearable and there is where you leave it. After all the struggling, you've finally got a firm stomach and a butt that doesn't wiggle. You've also got panty-lines because the fit's too tight. You learn to live with it because if you want a flat stomach, you need the girdle.

If an idea was clear to begin with, you wouldn't need an analogy. When you're trying to put the comparisons together there is a lot of stretching and pulling at the truth to get it to fit properly. When you say your analogy has such-and-such in common, you notice how you have to maneuver the other things in common to get them to fit as well as your first point.. After you get it all down on paper, it still has "panty-lines," because it's not exactly the way you want it. You just have to live with it.

Analogy's stretch the truth to fit, like girdles stretch their elastic. As hard as you try to look good, you're going to have problems writing five paragraphs on your analogy. One paragraph is easy. Maybe two wouldn't be difficult. Analogies and girdles are like hard work, but that's another subject, and going into that now would mean five more paragraphs.

—Peggy Barnes

Notes

¹William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*. Quoted in Joyce S. Steward, *Contemporary College Reader* (Scott, Foresman and Company, 1981), p. 212.

²Shakespeare, p. 212.

³Shakespeare, p. 212.

AND THEY'LL BE NOBODY HOME

In the post-World War II period of American society, there was a small piece of the American Dream reserved exclusively for wives—not women, but wives. This portion of the Dream outlined the perfect American household, complete with modern appliances, picture windows, and at least one station wagon in very garage. The media encouraged all those little housewives to abandon the antiquated household drudgery for the luxury of baking pre-packaged brownies while dressed in peter-pan collars and stiletto heels. No one explained that the Great Society of post-war America, like those new appliances, had a built-in component of planned obsolescence. Linda Loman bought her husband's fantasy, unaware that as "no man only needs a little salary,"¹ no woman only needs a little house. Her parting comment to her husband's grave, "and they'll be nobody home,"² tells a great deal of the tragedy of the concept of "wife" in her modern society.

As time and technology began to race ever faster through the end of the '40s and the beginning of the '50s, an entire generation of people had one foot in the past and one foot in a space-age future. The promises and predictions of better living through science could not even attempt to stem the devastating social changes that would occur with that progress. The traditional family priorities that rang true for generations simply ceased to have value in a world that was more educated and better shod. There were two wars remembered that were supposed to end all wars, but no one counted on the specter of nuclear obliteration as the price to be paid for peace. The women who had supported the war effort with factory work were now told to stand on pedestals and let Westinghouse do household chores for them. White male society was going to be marching forward and its women were the spectators.

The concept of "wife" in those years was to be redefined to the extreme. Not only was a wife a mere extension of her husband, but now she was also to be the twentieth century version of the ideal Victorian spouse. She was dressed in large size versions of little girls' clothes, her waist was cinched by tight belts, and her feet were stuffed into shoes that denied the existence of toes. She played house by day with dollies of her own making. Most of all, however, she was never to grow up. Clairol hid her age and cosmetics hid her wrinkles. After all, dolls never grow old; they only fall apart from use.

Who could imagine that pedestal-sitting could be so difficult? Who could think that living as a non-person could be so destructive? The post-war definition of "wife" served white male society in various ways. First, it removed wives from the competition for the new job market. It also allowed for a replenishment of the baby population and the business enterprises that are still associated with the boom of babies. It allowed for a stable home background for husbands and children. Schools and shopping areas no longer needed to be centrally located since more wives had their own cars. City living could give way to the new suburban lifestyles. This, in turn, provided for a boon in business across the board, and the race for American materialism on a grand scale was on. The women who didn't conform to the lifestyle of the time were met with discrimination and dead-end jobs. The women, like Linda Loman, who had bought the Dream with little success, were left to fend as best they could, with cheap appliances and cheap automobiles. At the end of their "productive" years, they, like Linda, were usually left alone or forgotten or depressed by the failures of their lives when compared to the Dream they had wanted to attain.

Linda Loman was a small woman who fought desperately for family unity and her husband's sanity. She was willing to settle for very little in her life, and that was her tragedy. When their tiny house was finally paid for, there was nobody home. Linda had ceased to exist as an individual. She, like her appliances, was all used up. At the end of the play, she was no longer even a wife: she was nobody. As *Death of a Salesman* can be construed as the tragedy of the common man, it can also be viewed as the tragedy of the common wife. A wife, submissive and powerless, cannot exert enough influence to control her own life. Linda Loman lost everything that constituted her identity—her sons, her hus-

band, and her world were gone. For a woman, there is no greater tragedy.

—Susan Lichtman

¹Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, in *Heath Introduction to Literature*, ed. Alice S. Landy (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1980), p. 776.

²Ibid., p. 777.

*Freshman Contest
Honorable Mention*

A YOUNG FISHERMAN'S DREAM

Fishing on Long Lake in Quantico Provincial Park, Quebec, Canada, I remember feeling as if I had stepped back a few pages in history, exhilarated at seeing nature in all its grandeur, unspoiled by the ravages of man's destruction. If I were thirsty, I could bend down and sip from a clear, cold brook. If I were hungry, nature provided a bounty of fruits, berries, and nuts to succor me. The scenery—oh, the scenery—how can man look upon the work of the hand of God and not be struck dumb with awe? The subtle interaction of the breeze whispering through the pine needles, the hauntingly lonely cry of a loon at sunset, the sound of a bear not 100 yards from where you lay sleeping, bring out the basic, more primitive soul locked deep within each and every man.

I remember the night before my big day, sitting just outside the ring of firelight dancing away from our campfire, watching the northern lights play across a screen so large it defies description. I knew, somehow, that something big was going to happen, but I couldn't quite put a finger on it. Finally, after all the dinner chores were done and everything was set for the morning's outing, I crawled into the security of our little nylon tent, snuggled deep down into the beckoning softness of my sleeping roll, and closed my eyes. I then drifted off into a virgin country and was the first white man to trudge where thousands of years of Indians had lived, loved, and died.

If you have ever been camping, I am sure you can remember that intoxicating aroma of bacon, eggs and hot coffee floating through the open flap of your tent at sunrise. If so, you can envision how fast I was out of that bed, dressed, and at the campfire that morning. After breakfast and cleanup were completed, we set off onto the lake to try a specific spot my uncle knew. We were about halfway through with our trip and, up until then, the fishing hadn't been anything to write home to Mother about. True, I had already eaten so much fresh walleye I thought I was going to grow gills! But still, we just couldn't seem to find any of those huge northern pike. We knew they were patrolling some secret coves, but where? We fished all morning with no spectacular luck. I was seriously considering the merits of going back to camp and feasting on some of those delicious walleye when my uncle said he would like to try one more bay just around the point from where we were. By this time I was a little drowsy so I said sure, leaned back, pulled my hat over my eyes and dozed off.

Although I still had my line out, I wasn't too worried since my uncle was going to troll over there anyhow. About the time we rounded the point I felt a tug on my pole, and it began to slide out of the boat. I grabbed it just as it started to go into the water and yanked instinctively to set the hook. My uncle mentioned that we had just passed a weed bed and my lure had probably gotten tangled. So, without a second thought, I began to reel in the line while my uncle made a wide sweeping turn to get back to the weed bed. We weren't twenty feet from the weeds when I saw a flash of silver. Almost at the same instant, my reel started to imitate a banshee after a bad night. Immediately, I flipped on the drag and tried to slow the line with my thumb. For this, I was rewarded with a two-inch long, quarter-inch deep cut that laid my thumb open and spotted the inside of our canoe with numerous crimson drops of blood. I remember thinking I had latched onto a misplaced Titan missile. My uncle stopped the boat and very calmly sat back and said, "Paul, now

you're going to find out what *real* fishing is." I don't remember his saying much else for the next three quarters of an hour, except maybe when to reel in slack or to let him run. He let me do it by myself, but was there if I needed him, and he let it be known that this was my fish to land or lose.

Then the battle really began. That old jugmouth was just not going to roll over and die, and he let me know it. First he wanted to see how much line I had on my reel and he almost did! Just when I was getting worried, he slowed, and I knew I had him. I had released about 175 feet of line before I could stop him, and I knew I had to fight him to get back every inch of it. Fight him, indeed. It was more like a war. I would reel in five yards, he would take three back; I'd take seven, he would get four; back and forth, back and forth, ten minutes, fifteen minutes, twenty minutes. Finally, after thirty minutes of pulling and straining, feeling every muscle in my upper body scream for release, I actually started making headway. Just as one battle does not a war win, headway does not mean a landed fish.

About this time I noticed a very definite burning sensation in my thumb, and everything around me was taking a shade of crimson. I paused and addressed the wound on my thumb. I handed the rod to my uncle and quickly broke out the first aid kit. Not even noticing the pain, just that my uncle was playing *my* fish, I poured half of the bottle of merthiolate on my thumb, and rigged up a very sloppy pressure bandage. As my uncle handed the rod back to me, I felt this behemoth of the deep readying to make another charge. Well, I thought to myself, it's now or never, and I refused to give him any line. As even the strongest of things must tire eventually, so did this fish. Instead of breaking my line, his charge brought him to the surface. I saw, for the first time, my invisible adversary. He did the most beautiful dance across the water, on the tip of his tail, that I have ever seen. I had nothing but admiration for this foe whom I had been battling for almost forty-five minutes in a constant duel of wit and strength. I also had as much determination as when I had started. Now, so close to culminating all my effort, I couldn't, no, I wouldn't lose him.

At that moment before he splashed back into the water, I caught a look at his eyes, and I will swear to this day he had a look of resignation on his face, as if he knew he had been beaten. He stopped fighting and allowed me to get him next to the boat. With a quick, sure stroke my uncle netted him and pulled him into the boat. The next few minutes were rather vague, as I remember falling back totally exhausted. Physically and mentally I was spent, and I was sure my adversary was the same.

We headed back to camp to clean and weigh the fish, and for a well-earned lunch. I remember being congratulated and listening as my uncle retold the events of the morning to our party. The thing I will never forget though, was when they weighed and measured my fish. He was 28 pounds, 52 inches long; boy, what a fish! As I lay down to sleep that night, I recall thinking of how lucky I was, a mere boy of fourteen, to be allowed to meet nature on her own terms. Here, truly in God's country, I had been challenged, accepted the challenge, and emerged victorious. That feeling I would not exchange for all the wealth in the world.

—Paul Ciesielski

*Freshman Contest
Honorable Mention*

THE DOUBLE BLESSING

May 5, 1970, was a gorgeous, balmy summer day. It was the kind of day a mother and son should share, soaking up the brilliant, healthy rays of the sun, and enjoying each other's company. Jeff was three years old at the time, and he was a tireless bundle of energy.

"Mommy, can we go for a walk?"

"Not right now."

"Well, can we go out and play?"

"Jeff, I have a lot of work to do today. Why don't you take your trucks out in front and play by yourself?"

"Okay."

He grabbed his truck, and out the door he flew. We lived in a secluded section of Elmwood Trailer Court, surrounded by tall trees of many varieties. It was beautiful in the summer, and I never had to worry about Jeff being out alone because we were far enough from the road to avoid traffic.

I felt a little ashamed of myself for being so short with him. I just wasn't quite myself these days. I think that I was eight months pregnant might have had something to do with it. I wasn't capable of doing all the things I normally could do. The doctor felt I was gaining too much weight. He put me on a diet, and he had taken salt out of my menus. It had been a long time since I'd seen my toes, and the biggest challenge facing me that day was the ironing, a tedious and thankless job.

I tried to iron that day, but it seemed to take twice as long to complete. I was having cramps in my stomach, and I had to stop every ten minutes or so to lie down until they passed. They were mild pains, but enough of an inconvenience that I couldn't continue my chore.

"Mommy, can I have lunch now?" Jeff came bounding in to ask.

"Yes, just a minute."

After lunch he went back outside, and I laid down for awhile. Unable to really relax, I gave up, and I began to make preparations for dinner. I was going to try a new recipe that night.

Joe came home from work, and as I prepared to set the table, he said, "We're supposed to have dinner at Uncle Walt and Aunt Helen's tonight."

Joe worked with his aunt at Liberty High School, and they had made these arrangements there.

"You could have told me about it before now!" I shouted with anger.

"I thought I had."

"Joe, I really don't feel very well, and I've already fixed dinner. Do you think you could cancel out for us?"

"I guess, but she's probably already started to cook."

We didn't have a telephone in our trailer, so he left to drive to their house to tell them.

The dinner I had prepared was not the taste tantalizing, scrumptious meal I'd hoped it would be. I remember throwing most of it into the garbage.

The cramps in my stomach continued. At about 9:00 P.M., we drove to a telephone. Joe and Jeff waited in the car while I called the doctor. He questioned me about the pains and then said, "You may be going into early labor. Go home, rest, and keep track of the time between the contractions."

Early labor. My God, I'd never even thought of that. I was only eight months along, and Joe's folks were planning to take Jeff when it was time for me to go to the hospital. What would we do with him if I had to go tonight?

We all returned home, and went to bed.

"Joe, I just had another pain."

"I can't see the clock very well. Now, when was your last pain?"

"I think I'll go into the other bedroom, and try to keep track myself. Why don't you try to get some sleep?"

I watched the clock and mentally recorded the time. The pains began coming at four minute intervals.

"Joe, you'd better call the doctor again."

It may seem careless to have waited so long to arouse Joe, but I hadn't "waited" with Jeff. Three years earlier, Joe's grandmother had been so afraid I would deliver at home that she insisted we get to the hospital at the first contraction! I was in the labor room for twenty-four hours, unable to change positions because supposedly the baby might shift, listening to the wails of the other ladies in the room, and becoming more frightened every moment of what was ahead for me. One lady cried for three hours that her baby was coming. The tenseness of that situation was, indeed, much

worse than the actual delivery.

Joe came back shortly, and breathlessly exclaimed, "The doctor says to get you to the hospital...and fast!"

I had nothing packed, so we threw a few things together, woke Jeff, bundled him up, and were on our way. The night was still, and as much as I would have liked to enjoy the night, my mind was on other things. I could tell Joe was nervous; Jeff, on the other hand, was oblivious to everything. He had already fallen back to sleep in the back seat.

We arrived at the parking lot of Porter Memorial Hospital in record time. It was about 12:35 A.M. by now. Why do babies like to arrive in the middle of the night? Joe grabbed my bag and Jeff, and was off.

Dr. Forchetti arrived shortly, dressed to operate. He checked my stomach, and did all those things I'm sure all doctors do to make sure everything is ready for surgery. I remember noticing that the mirror wasn't set up so that I could watch this time. I had seen Jeff make his grand entrance. It was a thrilling experience for me, but one my husband has never been sorry he missed!

"Okay, we're ready. Now bear down. Come on. Breathe. Okay, let's try it again. Keep pushing. That's it. The baby's coming. Keep pushing. A little harder. We're almost finished. There. Relax."

"What is it?"

"It's a boy!"

"Great!"

"Doctor," the nurse broke in through all our excited chatter, "I still hear an awfully healthy heartbeat!"

"What? Let me have that."

He grabbed her stethoscope and examined my stomach, then took his place again at the end of the table.

"She's right. Here we go again."

One nurse flew out of the room in search of another bassinet and blanket, another took care of the first baby, and out of nowhere appeared a third nurse to help the doctor. The first nurse came back with the bassinet and hurriedly placed my thumb in the ink and on the certificate. However, in her anxiousness, she'd grabbed the wrong hand. I now had two black thumbs. At this point, I was still not fully aware of what was really happening here.

"This one can be a girl!" I exclaimed.

It was beginning to sink in. I was having twins. How can this be? The doctor had never suspected twins; he just thought I liked to eat too much. Why hadn't he heard another heartbeat before now? Was something wrong with this baby? With what little time I had to think about it, I was really starting to worry.

The doctor and I worked for the next nineteen long minutes, and when the baby was in full sight, the doctor announced, "It's another boy!"

"Is he okay?" I asked with great concern.

"He looks fine to me?"

With that assurance, I reluctantly allowed myself to be eased into sleep, so that the doctor could complete his work. When I awoke I was anxious to know if the nurses or the doctor had told Joe.

They said, "No, we decided to let you surprise him."

They wheeled me, with a baby on each arm, out into the hall where Joe was waiting.

"Well, what did we get?" he asked as he casually glanced at the baby on my right.

"Two boys!"

His eyes widened as he looked to my left side, back to the right, and then to the left again.

"Oh, my God!"

Thus, we shared the beginning of a day that neither of us will ever forget.

—Jane Wycoff

SONG OF EMPTINESS

He thought he heard it again—that delicate, crystallic sound that seemed at once partly the whisper of music from some unearthly stringed instrument, partly fine, pure voices as soft as the summer wind that capriciously fingered its path through the ripe grass, and yet partly still the piercingly clear quality of tinkling crystal bells shivering in a gentle breeze. Straining to catch the elusive sound again, he paused in midswing and leaned upon the handle of his scythe. But the only sounds that drifted across the heavy air were the shrilling of grasshoppers, the soaring plaint of a warbler, and the clean hiss of Molly's scythe as it cleaved through the knee-high grass.

As though she felt the weight of his gaze resting absently on her back, Molly too paused, carelessly brushing back wispy tendrils of hair loosed from the heavy dark mass knotted at the nape of her neck.

"It's a fine cutting, Colin." Her eyes swept across the half-mown field before smiling into his.

"And an early one. We'll get another before fall. You've brought good luck, Molly."

"As much a willing pair of hands and a strong back." The curious blend of mischief and dignity that lit her eyes awoke a responsive warmth in his. He had loved this sturdy proud woman at the first moment he saw her dancing in the marketplace on County Wicklow Fair Day, flying skirts flashing over nimble feet, dark hair like a cloud about her shoulders, and the quick warmth of her eyes belying her grave smile and quiet way.

Perhaps another man would have known no lacking in the fullness of Molly's love. But there were moments when a deep sadness uncurled like a bud somewhere inside of him and expanded and blossomed until it filled him with an aching void, when he was filled with an unnameable despair and a longing for something he had never known engulfed him. And he would cease his movements and look around at the white-washed walls of his cottage, at Molly in her low chair beside the fireplace, her fingers busy with thread and needle, and know with a dark certainty and self-loathing that the simple contentment and comfort offered by this quiet life—no, this world was not enough and could never be enough for him. Something tugged at him in these sharply poignant moments, something piercing and demanding with sudden pain so intense that he must bend his head and close his eyes and thrust away its dark invasion with all his will—fighting too the unacknowledged fear that this time it might prove too strong and he must yield to it and be lost forever.

The corners of the cottage were still lost in shadow when he woke, and the dim grey light that the window admitted was lost in the dark rafters. With quick cautious movements he rose and dressed. Before he lifted the doorlatch, he looked back at Molly, curled tightly against the damp morning air, the dark tangled mass of her hair spilling across the pillow.

Random threads of pink cobbled the morning sun to the lackluster pewter of the sky. Restlessness dictated his need to move, but irresoluteness of purpose held him fast and he stood indecisively on the doorstep for a long moment before he started toward the furtive skeins of dawn.

For some moments it was enough merely to be moving. The earth was rousing drowsily, piping soft plaints through the throats of still-nested birds. Iridescent threads of dewdrenched cobwebs laid delicate traceways between damp tufts of grass that were shorn of the heady warmth and fragrance bestowed by the sun. In one tough hillock, he raised a hare that started in terrified flight, and the sudden spray of diamonds that marked the path of its going left a dark wet trail robbed of its brief resplendence.

But soon he felt his way dictated, and the pleasure of the morning was forgotten as he pushed hastily through fields, up hills and down valleys, driven by a sense of urgency that he did not understand until, as he clambered one last grass-slippery hillside, the strange melody drifted across the still air. The crystal notes soared, surged, and finally ensnared within a silken net that drew him blindly and stumbling from the hillside.

His path followed a shallow valley that threaded its narrow way between low rounded hills, the

crests of which glowed softly with a pearly grey-green sheen, though below he walked in the dusky light that divided night from dawn. Abruptly the valley branched. The wider way coursed on between the hills, but the song led him through a narrower gap, toward a distant march of trees. Soon he became aware of a new song mingling its voice with that of the other, but he knew it for what it was and followed the voice of the river into the march of trees.

Shallow water slid over grey and brown shelves of smooth flat rock and green moss, with only a soft whisper of plaint and an occasional rebellion of froth to mark its passing. To the west he heard a quickening chatter and an underlying, increasing note of complaint as the stream gathered momentum and strength and swept relentlessly over tumbling pebbles and broken rock. But that way was lost in darkness, and his way led to the dawn. The murmur dwindled as the banks of the stream widened, and the water laid as a slow silken sheet over its bed. His path grew more difficult as he forced his way through or around the willows, brush and trees that overhung the quiet banks, but the increasing intensity and purity of the song drove him relentlessly.

He pierced the birthing place of the stream at the same instant as did the sun. Bright shafts of whiteness stabbed the dark green canopy of the sheltering trees and scattered a cascade of pinpoint diamonds across the pale green of the quiet water. All was silent as earth and water, tree and rock, embraced and drew in the quickening warmth and sustenance. There was a breathless pause as the light probed the westernmost boundary, a breathless surrender as the twilight resistance melted, and the song began gaining in purity and intensity past anything he had ever experienced.

She rose from the pale water, a lithe, white form born of the light and freshness and fecundity of the summer morning, and the streaming green-gold hair that cascaded dripping over her bare shoulders did nothing to conceal the slender body beneath. She regarded him pertly, provocatively, as might a mischievous child undauntedly outstare a reproving and secretly amused adult, and drops of water dimpled the quivering skin of the water surface as she defiantly tossed back the curtain of her hair. The pure white line of her suddenly-revealed throat struck him like the lash of a whip. She laughed, and the song of her laughter was like tinkling crystal bells shivering in a gentle breeze.

"Who are you?" he demanded hoarsely. She laughed again, the sound quivering and slipping like quicksilver. She was motionless in the knee-high water as he stepped to the pool's edge, and there was no memory of Molly in the small firm breast half-hidden beneath her streaming hair nor in the line of her round yet childish hip. She stood beneath his gaze innocently and shamelessly, and the intensity of his gaze neither diluted her innocence nor stirred her shamelessness. She was an object and a product of the naturalness around her, and he knew no guile in her.

"Come," she said finally, and the sound of her voice was the song of pure, fine voices as soft as the summer wind. The strange green-gold of her eyes snared him and he knew a brief moment of panic as he glimpsed something alien and forbidden hidden deep within her, and then a veil dropped across the secret in her eyes and he reached for her.

There was an instant of warm yielding flesh and the cold raw silk of wet hair beneath his hands, and then there was nothing. Blindly he half-stumbled, half-fell into the water after her, but she, born of wind and water and sun, skimmed across the surface of the water as elusively and as lightly as a leaf skating across the wind, and stood laughing on the other bank.

"Come, Colin!" her voice teased, mocked him. The whiteness of her body rivalled the brilliance of the morning sun as she taunted him across the vast gulf that divided her world from his, and then she was gone and the sound of her passing carried with it the song from some unearthly strung instrument.

The days passed. Grass was mown, spread to dry in the heavy sun, and piled in warm and fragrant layers in towering haycocks. The wheat ears swelled and filled, and their heads bleached golden and bowed toward the ground. He scanned the sky, willing the ripening before a storm might flatten the sheaves to the earth, and his mind was filled with streaming green-gold hair and bare wet shoulders. Sheep grazed the rich green hillsides while lambs grew fat and silly with the mindlessness of their kind. He, who had laughed aloud at the simple pure joy they felt of life and youth, harbored the memory of the youthful joy and sensuousness of a lithe white body clad only

by the morning sun, and he grew silent.

Molly watched with silent, troubled gaze, but they both knew there was no wrong in her. The distance that separated them grew hurt by hurt, day by day. He tasted of the same shame and pain that she felt, but he could not help her and Molly, after all, was not made of humble stuff and her pride would not let her become less than what she was. Always he waited for the song that never came and the green-gold hair that was the substance of his dreams held that promise of things unknown for which he yearned and of which he despaired ever knowing. The song must come again, and the dark fatalism that grew with this knowledge bespoke of the fearful power that it claimed over him. For when it came again, he would answer it without thought of cost or consequence. And thus it happened.

The day had been heavy and sultry. The scant breeze that pushed ahead of it the evening darkness had brought only a promise of coolness as thin and frail as its own weak breath. Perhaps it was the nagging worry of storm that sent him so often to the cottage door, for they had begun to reap the wheat only that morning. But the sky was clear save a rare drift of cloud that momently veiled the tiny hard stars, and the moon, swollen with the abundance of the harvest season, swung low and red about the hills.

"'Tis a close evening," Molly remarked as she passed between sink and cupboard behind him. But, as had become his habit, he failed to answer. When she turned, he was gone. Out of the darkness the song beckoned, ethereally but unmistakably, and the urgency matched the sudden leaping urgency of his heart and body. The shadow of his passing outpaced the sound of his racing footsteps. Behind him, he dimly heard Molly's voice, but already she belonged to another world—that other world now, as he relinquished claim and citizenship to surrender himself to that which was the stuff and song of dream.

Always she ran before him, the green-gold of her hair licking like an unruly fringe of flame at the flat, sterile white and crimson moon sheen. The sound of her laughter was the promise of cool water and the whiplash of hot, pounding blood, and the strange green-gold eyes drew him, compelled him, when breath and strength were gone.

"Come, Colin!" she cried, and the drift and purity of her voice was a taunt that stung and urged and cajoled and caressed.

The night was suddenly full of song and ethereal, tiny figures that shimmered and sparkled as they danced and caught and reflected the cold hard shine of stars and moon. He stumbled to a halt as fear caught up with him and he knew with a chilling clarity where he was. But green-gold eyes teased and snared and an out-stretched bare white arm gleaming soft and rounded in the moonlight beckoned him on.

Somehow Molly was there, pulling at his arm desperately, and all the love and all the richness and the giving and the abundance of her world were in her voice and in her touch. He saw the dark, tumbled mass of her hair against the strained whiteness of her face. He saw love and terror in her eyes, and his heart ached for her and for himself, but the lure of green-gold eyes and the magic of the song were too strong. He turned toward the promise of green-gold eyes and for a brief second relished that promise. But then in horror he saw its flare of triumph and the secret veil lifted and he saw the abyss of emptiness and knew the fatalness of his mistake. But it was too late. He had made his choice and he was lost, and white arms reached eagerly to claim their own.

With an anguished cry, Molly thrust herself between them and into his arms. The warmth and urgency of her body against his and the overwhelming power of her love ripped through the brittle shield of his trance like a knife, and the cold power of green-gold eyes flickered. His arms closed around Molly as his eyes searched her upturned face, and there was no more to offer or to be found in either world that was not there for him already. With a groan of shame and anguish, he buried his face against her hair. The song was gone and green-gold hair flamed briefly in the moonlight, and he knew that he would never know either again.

—Susan Howard

THE GIRL WHO DREAMED OF FAERYLAND

"She's not much of this world," the old ones of the village said. "There's the touch of faeries on her."

Richard Briggs was inclined to scoff inwardly at these comments, for it was that deepseated superstition and that clinging to the old ways that had first caused him to cross the sea in search of the open minds belonging to the wider world. And if each summer he returned faithfully to this tiny white-washed village pressed into the embrace of the green sea by overhanging craggy and wild cliffs, it was only because he could admit to his sensitivity to its natural beauty, and not to the great yearning that tormented him during all of his long months away.

Yet there was something ethereal about the girl, he admitted reluctantly when he first saw her in the churchyard after evening service. She was small and slim, and there was something birdlike in her delicate, tiny bones and in her quick, graceful movements and in the odd way she had of tilting her face into the warmth of the sun as though exulting in and claiming its promise of life and generation. Her quick, eager movements tumbled the mass of pale auburn hair that spilled softly and artlessly down her back. He moved closer, intrigued by the contradictory ambiance of vitality and delicacy, and heard the note of quiet joy in her voice and soft laughter, a note reflected in the green eyes that she raised briefly to his when she felt his gaze. Quickly she dropped her eyes against the intrusive, curious glance of the silent, tall stranger and a flush spread across her high cheekbones and she fell silent in the chattering crowd. He would have approached her then, would have spoken to her, would have apologized for his rudeness merely to hear her soft voice addressed to him alone, had not someone claimed her attention and drawn her away.

"But what about her?" he asked his mother casually during their walk home in the soft gloom.

"I don't know," she shook her head slowly. "There is that which is different about Katherine, but I don't know what. Surely there is little cause for fulfillment for her, being tied to her parents as she is—her mother is ailing and she tends for her and her father, the vicar—but there is love and generosity. And yet there is something in what the old ones say—there is something fragile, something of fate or of the faery about her. We can't deny that it does happen, though we know that it couldn't."

She glanced affectionately at her son as he drew her close with an arm about her waist. If he knew himself a stranger in his own birthplace, so much more did she, for the restlessness and native intelligence that marked him had been inherited from her. They were close, these two, with a tie that went beyond the bond between mother and son, but that included in its richness a mutual respect, sensitivity and understanding. They knew each other in a way that went beyond words and now, though she intuitively sensed the appeal of the girl's elusive nature to him and felt faintly of its danger, she said nothing more.

And if she sensed the nature of the thoughts that preoccupied him in the following days, she did not mention it, for she also realized that for all his sensitivity and for all his worldliness, there were still parts of himself that he had never touched or apprehended and that he could not therefore understand.

Restlessly he roamed the rocky, windswept shore, pausing for long moments to watch the shrieking, untidy gulls draw their unceasing patterns in stabbing white, now against the deep blue of a cloudless sky, now against the dark emerald of the sea, and he saw again the whiteness of a delicate lace collar and the light of quiet joy in green eyes. He stooped to snatch up pebbles to toss against the sibilant, restless waves, and remembered soft laughter and the vitality of a delicate, graceful body.

At last, weary and angry at the melancholy and the impotence that the sea engendered, he turned his attention and his wanderings to the rough cliffs that hemmed the village against the sea. The long-forgotten path was steeper and more boulder-stewn than he remembered from past years, but at last he sprawled upon a sun-warmed, uneven shelf of rock at the top of the world to

catch his breath and nurse scraped palms and newly-tested muscles. Before him, the limitless expanse of water unfolded into its ultimate union with the sky while, below, he eyed the defiant resistance of crumbling granite outcroppings against the implacable hunger of the sea that boiled around them. He rested for a few minutes before going on. To his left, flowering gorse and wild, tough grass swept away in an uneven wave before blending subtly with more hospitable and tender forage where sheep grazed. To his right were only the crumbling cliffs, the sea, the empty sky, and the wind.

He saw the blue movement against the dark rock long before he knew it for what it was, and the sudden leap of his heart told him who it was long before his eyes could. Although he was clumsy in his haste and she must have heard him approach, it was not until he reached her side at the cliff's edge that she turned to look at him with the pure, clean light of her eyes.

"Is it you, then?" she asked softly.

"Yes," he said, because he had no other answer. She shrank back suddenly as though with fear and he reached quickly to reassure her, but dropped his hand instead. She regarded him intently, her face tilted into the sun, and he saw the delicate blue traces of vein through translucent skin and marveled at her fragility.

"I'm sorry if I startled you," he offered in apology. "I'm..."

"I know who you are," she interrupted him, and there was a vibrant joy in her voice. "Tell me about the fairies."

He stood nonplussed for a long second, torn between the truth of his disbelief and the need to stay her companionship, but, "I will," he said finally.

Thus it began. That warm summer afternoon passed, but another succeeded it, and another, and yet another. Together they wandered the rocky cliffs and watched the gorse and heather bloom and heard the kestrels and gulls cry and tasted the wind-driven salt spray against their faces. He told her all that he knew of faery, but there was always more to remember--something tucked away from some forgotten winter evening's entertainment--that brought forth a leap of delight in her smile and a leap of joy in her green eyes. He told her of the *ellyldan*, the *will o'the wisp* that delights in misleading unwary travelers into fens and bogs; and of the Great Ghost of Henllys, the ghost of the dead man who turns into a demon; and of Finn MacCumhal, who sleeps in a cave beneath a hill and who can only be awakened if someone would enter the cave and blow three times on a whistle that lies beside him.

And ever he delighted in the changing moods of her face, the childlike shift from joy to woe to fear to laughter, and he exulted in the clear pure flame in her eyes and in the spontaneous, unaffected nature of her laugh. He rejoiced in the quick, eager movements of her small body as, sometimes, she darted like a dragonfly from crumbling cliff to uneven shelf far ahead of him until at last, impatiently aware of his lagging far behind, she would turn back to him laughing, and then the gracefulness and sudden dignity of her walk was a ache against his heart. He yearned to touch her, to hold her, but she was as fragile and as unsubstantial as a blown dandelion and he felt himself clumsy and rough. And there was always an elusiveness, a mystery in her woman's ways and in her woman's thoughts, that he did not understand but that he could only observe and long to know and to share. He knew himself to be complex and he respected the inner lives of others, so while he recognized ruefully that she matched him in complexity, he could only wait for the time when she would reveal herself. Sometimes, when he turned his gaze from some distant object back to her, he surprised a certain gentleness or longing in her face that raised a sudden flare of expectancy in him, but, locked into his hesitancy and confused by the contradiction between her vitality and her shyness, he could only risk the quick, gentle pressure of hand upon hand.

One day he told her of the *Tuatha De Danaan*, the people of the Faery Hills who travel in the whirling wind, and quoted some lines from Yeats:

"...Away, come away:
Empty your heart of its mortal dream.
The winds awaken, the leaves whirl round,
Our cheeks are pale, our hair is unbound,

Our breasts are heaving, our eyes are agleam,
Our arms are waving, our lips are apart;
And if any gaze on our rushing band,
We come between him and the deed of his hand,
We come between him and the hope of his heart."

"How wonderful it would be--to be free and ride on the wind!" she sighed with pensive face. As if in rebuke, a sudden gust from the sea whipped her long hair like a curtain across her face.

"And aren't you free, faery maiden?" he teased, thinking to indulge her unwonted sadness, and gently brushed the hair from her eyes. She caught his hand as she drew back to look at him intently.

"You know that I'm not. Only the faery magic can do that." She turned away, but not before he caught the brightness of unshed tears in her green eyes. After a bemused moment, he laid his arm about her shoulders and she moved against him to bury her face against his chest. They stood thus for a long moment without speaking, as he held her and marveled at the warmth and yielding of her body against his, before she raised her head.

"Are you the one?" she asked tremulously.

He did not know what to answer, and when he hesitated, she pushed herself free with something akin to panic.

"Are you the one?" she demanded with a rising note of urgency.

"I don't know," he admitted helplessly, and with a cry of anguish she fled from him.

For three afternoons he waited vainly and apprehensively beside the path, but when on the fourth day she finally returned, he was dismayed by her paleness and listlessness as she stood before him. Gone was the light of joy in her green eyes, and gone, too, were the gracefulness and quickness of step and gesture.

"I'm sorry," he offered abjectly, though he did not then understand, and he opened his arms. Silently, softly, she came to him and his heart lightened as he gathered her close. "It's all right--it's all right, you know. Tell me why you asked if I were the one."

"Because one must come to free me by faery magic." She raised intent green eyes to his. "Is it you?"

And still he failed to understand, but laughed indulgently as he smoothed back her pale auburn hair. "But we don't really believe in fairytales, do we?"

She was passive and silent under his touch for along moment before she pushed herself free. "Then we must live that time which is left," she said in a curiously quiet tone.

He caught her hand as she turned away. "But we have the rest of our lives," he protested, and he thought that he had told her he loved her. But, then, they had never known each other, and now he watched in despair as day by day she retreated further into a world where he, for all his desire and for all his will, could not follow. He longed to hold her, to cradle her like a child in his arms and shield her with his love, but he could not, for he knew with bitter regret that he did not now have, nor had he ever had, that right.

She who had tasted with spirit and joy so fully of life knew now only the frailty of body and will, and she tired easily. One day as they came down the path, they stopped to rest beside a small cluster of trees which were stunted, gnarled and withered by rocky soil and exposure to the salty sea wind. She leaned against a rock, wearily tilting her face into the sun, and he was stricken anew by the transparency of her skin. A sudden gust whipped the drift of sere leaves beneath their feet into a whirling cloud before sweeping them away. Abruptly, unwillingly, his eyes leapt to hers, and their gaze caught and held.

"The faeries are passing to the Western Isles," she said, and her green eyes were bright with unshed tears. "And I cannot live in a world that is barren of magic."

That night she, too, passed from the world of mortal men.

"The faeries claim their own," the old ones said, wisely shaking their heads.

The evening before he would cross the sea, he climbed the path to stand in the fading light for

the last time at the edge of the crumbling cliff. Below him, red and golden sea quietly embraced dark granite outcroppings while gracefully and gently yielding its mystery and its separateness to red and golden sky. Earth and sea and sky were one, and thus at last, there where it had begun, he understood.

"Katherine, forgive me," he whispered into the wind. "If I had known, I would have surrounded you with magic. But I never knew--ah, I never knew..."

—Susan Howard

*Open Contest
Third Prize Winner*

THE RITE OF PASSAGE THROUGH WINESBURG, OHIO: IN SEARCH OF THE MYSTICAL WAY

It is fortunate that the early criticism of *Winesburg, Ohio* as being merely a series of loosely related short stories has largely been abandoned. The rapidly growing volume of material written on the subject indicates the intensity with which subsequent readers have felt such early evaluations grossly unfair. If anything present criticism acclaims the remarkable degree to which Anderson has managed to sustain a wide array of themes ranging from color and place imagery to Freudianism and Christ symbolism, to name only a few. What is even more remarkable is that such controversy could ever have existed over a work that so clearly, almost heavy-handedly, reveals its specifically charted course from the first through the final chapters. It is definitely a credit to Anderson's genius that early critics did not indeed charge the author with blatant didacticism, certainly an approach largely in disrepute in the post-war period in which the book first appeared. But just as strands of various themes can be shown to have been spun intentionally throughout the tales, the threads have, in turn, been consciously woven together by the author. They have been stretched upon the framework of the highly developed conceits of Anderson's philosophy of life and shuttled by the life-process that he suggests for achieving mystical union with the universal One. It is the successful execution of this process—this rite of passage into maturity—" . . . that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible."

It would appear that Anderson has, through *Winesburg, Ohio*, presented this intricate philosophy of life. It is generally agreed that the writer appearing in the opening chapter of *Winesburg* as the author of *The Book of the Grotesque* is indeed Anderson's projection of himself as an old man. Similarities between *Winesburg* and Anderson's boyhood home of Clyde, Ohio, make it fairly obvious that these tales spring from Anderson's own experiences. He even goes so far as to have the old writer's bed raised onto a platform much like the one he had built for his own Chicago apartment. One can almost hear Anderson laughing to himself as, from his own experience with some overworked and independently minded carpenter, he recounts,

The plan the writer had for raising of his bed was forgotten and later the carpenter did it in his own way and the writer, who was past sixty, had to help himself with a chair when he went to bed at night.

It is with an equally self-effacing smile that the author can write in his final observation of the central character, George Willard, that "One looking at him would not have thought him particularly sharp," for the boy growing up in this small midwestern town must certainly be Anderson as well.

These perceptions are most probably sensed intuitively by the reader and have been sufficiently discussed in various criticisms. They are only mentioned here to reinforce the deep sense of personal exposition the author must have felt in telling these tales. The stories of *Winesburg* are the recollections of the tired and contemplative old man Anderson expects to become, remembering the innocence and anquish of youth through which he has passed, then revealed to the reader by Anderson as narrator in the process of the transition. It is this very process of coming of age that

the three Andersons in *Winesburg* set out to reveal. *The Book of the Grotesque* (as Anderson had originally intended his *Winesburg, Ohio* to be entitled) is Anderson (as narrator) observing Anderson (as writer) recalling Anderson (as the newsboy George Willard). What applies to *The Book of the Grotesque* and its writer applies, in like expression, to *Winesburg, Ohio* and Sherwood Anderson as well.

The author could not have stated his own intention for unity more clearly than he does in describing the old man's book as having "... one central thought that is very strange and has always remained with me." Anderson proceeds to summarize for the reader that thought central to *The Book of the Grotesque*—to *Winesburg* itself—as he states,

The thought was involved but a simple statement of it would be something like this:

In the beginning when the world was young there were a great many thoughts but not such thing as a truth. Man made the truths himself and each truth was a composite of a great many vague thoughts. All about in the world were the truths and they were all beautiful.

But a simple statement of his philosophy would, for Anderson, have seemed vague and ambiguous (just as this "simple" explanation for *The Book of the Grotesque* appears to be). He deems it an "elaborate theory" that he attempts to convey; such a simple statement serves only as a provocative riddle enticing the reader to seek its resolution through subsequent chapters. Anderson beckons us to follow him through the streets of *Winesburg, Ohio*. He perceives this path to be the mystical way that can ultimately "save the old man," the mature being so susceptible to grotesqueness, that each of us becomes upon leaving the innocence of childhood.

Anderson has clearly marked this path upon which the reader is to embark with an intricate system of road signs to reveal the direction and conditions of the journey. From the limited vocabulary used in *Winesburg* he has managed to create a new and highly concentrated language in which certain words and phrases function as the hieroglyphics of his thought. In the world of *Winesburg, Ohio*, "truth" takes on new meaning and the term "adventure" becomes uniquely limited, being "young" and being "womanly" can mean the same thing and yet not mean what is conventionally thought at all, and to be a "grotesque" is to be one of any number of social aberrations among humanity. It must be remembered that *Winesburg* was written in serial form and was not, in all likelihood, intended to be read in one sitting. The pointed and frequent repetition of certain words effectively recalls for the reader certain parallels in chapters removed by significant periods of time. But more than this, such repetition alerts the reader to certain keys that can aid in following this roadmap of Anderson's philosophy of life.

Discovery of the meaning of these word-codes progresses much as the unraveling of a murder mystery. The definition of certain of these hieroglyphics is revealed at the outset reappearing in later stories to reinforce and enlarge our understanding of the term. This is evident with the idea of grotesqueness. Other concepts such as those of dreams or of youth remain largely undeciphered until the final chapters leaving the reader with the excitement of anticipating their true function in the world of Anderson's mind.

In *Winesburg, Ohio* Anderson presents as much a parlor game on the process of life as he does a psychological novel. The reader must take up the marker that is the character of George Willard and observe as it is moved from square to square across the playing board laid out upon the streets of the midwestern town. The object of the game is to see George safely through adolescence to a healthy psychical maturity. Fate and time throw the dice that compel the boy-character to move toward that imminent goal. Along the way George encounters other players of the game, the grotesques of *Winesburg*, who have not as yet completed the course or who have simply conceded to defeat. He is required to not fall into any of the many traps along the way that have the power to hold one in a state of perpetual grotesqueness. But by the end of the novel we find that George has not finished the game but is merely being moved to another setting. It is only through our glimpse of the old writer as the projection of George Willard in old age that we discover the outcome of the contest: the writer has managed, though only just, to avoid the pitfalls of his journey through maturity and is but a short time away from a victorious conclusion to his life.

The human condition requires each of us to play this game as well, and in *Winesburg, Ohio* Anderson has provided the handbook by which to do so. Stated in the hieroglyphic terms that he applies to life's rite of passage, we discover the following progression:

The *ADVENTURE OF LIVING*
reveals *COSMIC ORDER*
that inspires *LEARNING*
that leads to *THINKING*
from which we form *TRUTHS*
that, for the *IMAGINATIVE*
produces *SOPHISTICATION*
that is the state of *REFLECTION*
through which we perceive the *GHOSTS*
that make up the *DREAMS*
that, when in *POSSESSION*,
create the *SPELL*
that produced *PURIFICATION*
that transforms sophistication into *ANIMALISM*
that is the evidence of *YOUTH*
that inspires the *LOVE FOR LIFE*
that overcomes the modern *FEAR*
of the apparent meaninglessness of life that is the *GROTESQUE*

Borrowing from the nursery rhyme, this is the mystical way that Anderson built. But let's look at these symbols that form the rite of passage that lead to the mystical way that Anderson built.

GROTESQUENESS:

The concept of grotesqueness forms a dominant theme of *Winesburg, Ohio*. It is this quality that pervades the ghosts of the old writer's dreams and is the quality that unifies the inhabitants of Winesburg. The old man's "elaborate theory" concerning these grotesques can be briefly stated as a reaction against character stagnation. According to the old writer as soon as one claims a corner on *truth*, the truth becomes a falsehood and the process of growth, and therefore the process of life itself, ceases. This is the prejudice and inflexibility that Kate Swift fears may overcome young George. As a writer his words must spring from sincerity and not from artifice; as a man he must learn "... to know what people are thinking about, not what they say." To reject even one of the "twisted little apples" that represent all the world's grotesques is evidence of one's own grotesqueness. But just as the twisted apples possess unmatched sweetness, the grotesques of the world are not all horrible but can be beautiful and amusing as well. They merely lack the uniformity of the fully rounded fruit. Their growth has stopped prematurely, and they are vulnerable to rejection both by nature and by men. Only those who mature into fully ripened fruit are able to experience what Anderson claims to be

... the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible.

THE LOVE FOR LIFE THAT OVERCOMES FEAR:

Such express dealing with the uncontrollable sense of fear concerning the future that grips twentieth-century Western thought places Anderson squarely among the modernists. He seeks to bring meaning to existence not by providing answers or "truths" but by encouraging the absorption of life's experience to the fullest. Where "art for art's sake" had been the cry of painters and sculptors of the period, "life for life's sake" became the reason for existence for Anderson. The love for life is the mystical experience that makes it all endurable. One who loves people, who knows how to love the twisted apples, "... loves life so intensely that tears come into the eyes." To be sustained in such a state is to achieve oneness with the Absolute life as defined by Evelyn Underhill in her highly acclaimed book, *Mysticism*. For George and Helen emerging from adolescence, the thought of the meaninglessness of life is no longer unbearable, for they have tasted the rapture of this love for living.

YOUTH:

But for most such moments are merely that: fleeting sensations that cannot be held on to. It is the process by which such moments are achieved that Anderson seeks to disclose. There is no room for the love for life within the stagnation of grotesqueness. This is left for the eagerness of youth to embrace. It is youth that looks forward to *what might be* rather than reflecting upon *what might have been*. Only by keeping alive this "young thing inside him" was the old writer himself saved from becoming a grotesque.

ANIMALISM:

Youth possesses a certain sureness about itself. The narrator notes that all children are egotists moving about as the centers of their universe, demanding of life what they will. Youth is a state of activity, and George repeatedly acts upon his impulses and unhesitatingly indulges his passions. He is subject, as are all children subjects, to the "warm unthinking little animal" that is in possession. For Anderson, to hold on to the innocence and eagerness of childhood is to hold on to the key of life. He sees the child in each of us much as William Wordsworth did in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality." Whereas "... trailing clouds of glory do we come/From God, who is our home," we at length "... perceive it die away, /And fade into the light of common day." This child born in harmony with the One—with the universal conscious—is subject himself to the destructive process of aging and the ensuing decrease of innocence with the inevitable increase of experience. Only though the gate of memory can he ever be purified and hope to return.

REFLECTION:

Reflection is the key to the recovery of lost innocence for Anderson as well as for Wordsworth. We each begin our rite of passage in the same manner. It is only upon maturity that the individual must try to regain what has been lost. The adventure of living is common to all and calls upon the youth to act thus producing new experience.

THE ADVENTURE OF LIVING:

The stories of *Winesburg, Ohio* are the stories of men and women caught up in some adventure of other. It is adventure that gives the characters the opportunity to take action and thereby break from stagnation. Only youth can respond to adventure with action. Kate Swift instructs George to pursue the adventure of living that he might become prepared to be a writer. It is with this thought in mind that George sets out on the train that takes him from his boyhood hometown. He will have to come to know life through its adventures before he can come to understand it and effectively write about its meaning.

THE AWARENESS OF COSMIC ORDER:

To be able to understand life, as George discovers in the chapter, "Awakening," one must come to the recognition of order in the universe. This mystical awakening of the self is the revelation that begins the process toward maturity. A sense of place in what George comes to recognize as the scheme of existence replaces, for him, his absorption in self as an egotistical child. It is this sense of belonging that inspires him to learn about life—the thing he had missed when Kate Swift had lectured him. This begins the process of thinking that the old writer traces back to the beginning of the world. From these thoughts were created the truths that make grotesques of so many. This is the point where growth so often ceases, as in the mystical experience, leaving the individual to decay in the vegetation of his own unyielding conception of cosmic order.

SOPHISTICATION AND THE GHOSTS OF REFLECTION:

An awakening to an awareness of some cosmic order is, according to Anderson, the moment of sophistication that comes with maturity. This is when the youth "... for the first time takes the backward view of life." It is a moment of intense sadness and despair by which those destined for grotesqueness are overwhelmed. But for the imaginative this sense of aloneness produces a state of reflection in which the ghosts of others, living and dead, materialize at the command of the memory. They come not to haunt but to instill an appreciation for the delectability of the twisted apples. Only through them can one learn to love life. These are the figures that keep the old man alive with his "... dream that was not a dream"; these are the lovers that revive in Elizabeth Willard the passion for the dream of her youth. Though all may dream, there are only a few who

truly cultivate a passion for their dreams. It was such a growing passion that carried away the young George Willard and compelled him to seek new adventures in his life.

THE SPELL CAST BY THE POSSESSION BY DREAMS:

Through possession by this passion for dreams, one is able to transcend the barrier that maturity places between youth and the love for life that gives meaning to existence. Only through dreams and an intense passion for dreaming can the experience of old age be supplanted by the enthusiasm of youth, restored through the process of memory. George and Helen were for the first time in their young lives experiencing the need for such reflection as they walked together to the fairgrounds. Discovering together the spell that can be cast by the dreams that grow out of reflection, they are purified and chastened by its power. Such purification allows for them the abandonment of the despair of maturity and they are momentarily returned to the animalism of youth. Such moments are recovered only occasionally and then only by the imaginative, but they are apparently frequent enough, according to Anderson, to sustain the love for living: the force that keeps mankind unified with the overall scheme of existence. This is the state of union with the One that marks the climax of the mystical experience.

Sherwood Anderson observes the human condition with sensitivity and compassion. The inhabitants of Winesburg are not condemned for their grotesqueness; indeed their distorted forms provide the very nourishment that allows the old writer—the Anderson of maturity—to survive. It is with tender longing that the old man looks back upon his youth, yet the sense of obligation to grow up prevails, for union with the One comes only through the experiences of life. It is this state of flux between maturity and youth that gives both meaning and passion to modern living. It is the rite of passage through *Winesburg, Ohio* that reveals the mystical way.

—Russell Sutcliffe

Honorable Mention Open Contest

THE "NEW" IMAGE OF WOMAN VERSUS THE MASS MEDIA

It has been pointed out by Mary Anne Ferguson and Virginia Woolf that women have long been hindered by stereotypes. Basically, such images have limited women to roles based on their biological functions with very little acknowledgement of their intelligence and need for individual fulfillment. As has been revealed in this course, there has been a slow, but painful, trend among female writers to establish themselves and their female characters as intelligent, independent individuals who have "the same degree of freedom of choice that men have—no more, no less."¹ Such a movement has largely reflected the progress which has actually been made in the real world as a result of various women's movements. Women, seeking independence and self-fulfillment, began combining their traditional roles with new ones in the labor force until today over fifty percent are employed.²

But—can a meaningful trend continue if the mass media do not reflect and support the "new image?" In an attempt to answer this question, I read the book, *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*,³ which is a compilation of various studies of television, magazines and newspapers. Beyond this, I designed a short, informal survey to which seventy-one individuals between the ages of nine and thirty-nine responded. I also recorded my personal observations of television programs, magazines and newspapers. My overall conclusion is that, with very few exceptions, the mass media offer very little support for a new image of woman as equal and independent. In fact, I have found indications that the Women's Movement is actually being stifled. Women continue to enter the labor force and "man's world," but the primary focus seems to be on economic necessity—not on woman's self fulfillment.

You may ask if the mass media can really have a significant effect. In the opinion of Tuchman, Daniels and Benet, editors of *Hearth and Home*, "the mass media in general and television in particular have replaced religion as a source of social control in American life... all available evidence about the impact of the media upon sex-role stereotyping indicates that the media encourage their audiences to engage in such stereotyping. The lead girls, in particular, to believe

that their social horizons and alternatives are more limited than is actually the case."⁴ I can personally verify the impact which television has on young viewers. Despite repeated discussions with my young daughters, my nine year-old persists in believing that *everything* on television is *real*. This was particularly disturbing to me since she usually has amazingly rational observations of the world around her. Unfortunately, mine is not an isolated case. The studies outlined in *Hearth and Home*, my survey results, and my other observations all support the premise that television *is* the world for a majority of our nation's children and adults. Traditional views are especially perpetuated and new views are skewed for persons who do not watch a variety of different programs.

Magazines and newspapers, as the second and third most dominant media, could provide valuable support for a "new image." However, the very fact that most magazines and different parts of the newspapers are directed to either men or women—but not both—underlines a clear distinction between "man's world" and "woman's world." The most widely circulated women's magazines and syndicated columns still focus on beauty and homemaking. Occasionally, items on women's achievements are inserted "between the recipes," but seldom do such items appear where men will also read them. Major male publications focus on sports, mechanics, women as sex objects, and men as leaders in business and industry.⁵

The results of my survey appear to indicate that traditional views and stereotypes will persist into the future with very little progress toward "liberated" ideals for men or women. The responses gathered generally indicate: 1) television is definitely the dominant medium; and 2) television, magazines and novels generally divide the respondents according to male interests versus female interests.

It is particularly interesting to note how the mass media may convey opinions which carry through to the individual's concepts of "the ideal image" of woman in the real world. Of thirty-one males who indicated their views of the "ideal," twenty-two indicated that a woman's most important roles are in the home. If she must work, it should not interfere with her ability to maintain her appearance, be a good wife and do her housework! In general, those responding in this way indicated favorite television programs and magazines which focus on men as heroes, lovers and athletes. For the nine males who concede that women are moving toward independence and equality, viewing and reading preferences indicate a variety of different kinds of programs and publications. Overall, however, the traditional stereotypes seem to overrule the subtle and sparse references to equality which most television programs and magazines include. The following is a fairly representative response of the "liberal" male viewpoint: "Women will become more commonplace in business therefore losing a greater part of the feminine look. Women will lose some of the warmth and become more callous. Women will be living one to one with men in a man's world." Only one male felt that a woman could achieve in the outside world without losing her femininity!

Of thirty-three females who expressed their view of the "ideal image" of woman, twenty-two emphasized family, home and personal appearance. If freedom and independence were mentioned, they were qualified by such words as "if necessary," "and yet," or included with other words that actually nullified the emphasis. The viewing and reading preferences indicated in these cases dwelled upon women playing major parts, but in basically stereotyped roles. Ambivalent responses appear to reflect the *qualified* ways in which the women characters are usually shown outside the home.

In the eleven instances where the female respondents mentioned intelligence and independence as the only necessary attributes of their "ideal woman," the viewing and reading preferences tended to indicate an interest in many different areas. Thus, the women's images to which they are exposed include more of those where women are shown entirely separate from or equal to men.

The strongest correlations between the media's images and personal opinions can be seen in the following:

One sixteen-year old girl responded, "An independent career woman should exist. She should be intelligent and strong. She should be able to handle herself and make her own decisions." This girl listed "M*A*S*H," "Dallas," and "Three's Company" as her favorite television programs. Her reading included *TIME*, *Bon Appetit*, *Skin Diver*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Eyes of Darkness*, and *Dmitri*. In general, her viewing and reading preferences cover a much broader range than the average.

At the other extreme is this response: "She should have a good personality. She should be pretty. She should have good grooming habits." For this girl, programs, magazines and novels which

emphasize beauty and romance dominate her selections.

Overall, my survey results indicate that most viewing and reading is concentrated on programs and publications which emphasize that men and women in traditional roles are preferable. The most liberal views tend to come from those who balance television viewing with reading, and who do not limit their viewing and reading to any one type of program or publication. But, the main message seems to have been delivered. A 1980 study of 17,000 high school seniors found "youths are clinging to many traditional values and habits." Their primary goals focus on happy marriages, good family lives and material possessions.⁶

Although I'm sure there are many other factors which shape an individual's concepts about himself and society, I am convinced that there is a large and direct correlation with an individual's contacts with the mass media. Currently, the images of men and women emphasized in the mass media perpetuate traditional roles and values. Women shown on television in situations outside of the home *generally* are shown as inferior or superior to men, but never equal to them. Written articles about women's achievements are usually found in *women's* publications with the smallest circulations. Thus, despite the actual progress which many women have made toward equality and self-fulfillment, the current Women's Movement is being undercut by the mass media—our nation's largest "socializing instruments." Combined with demographic and economic problems, the overall effect is that women's equality in the "real world" will once again be pushed to the background as it has been in the past.

—Darlene Peters

¹Mary Anne Ferguson, *Images of Women in Literature*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1977), p. 33.

²"Battle of the Sexes: Men Fight Back," *U.S News & World Report*, December 8, 1980, p. 51.

³Gaye Tuchman, Arlene K. Daniels and James Benet, *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media* (New York, 1978).

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 30

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 91-222.

⁶"Youth on the Move," *U.S. News & World Report*, December 29, 1980/January 5, 1982, p. 73.

Open Contest

Honorable Mention

THE UNITY OF WINESBURG, OHIO

At first reflection, it is difficult to assess Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*¹ as constituting a complete and self-contained work. Historically, the term "novel" designates an extended and cohesive prose narrative, its parts organized, related and unified by some common principle that operates as a thread weaving the fabric into a smooth, seamless cloth. Clearly this definition would deny the application of the term "novel" to a collection of twenty-one short stories preceded by an ambiguous prologue. But, as Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* illustrate, tale collections may be unified through the fact of framework.

Boccaccio's *Decameron* treats tales shared between a common group: a collection of young people seeking refuge from the plague remove from the city to the country and, in an attempt to alleviate their boredom, relate stories to one another. The only feature of commonality is the setting.

Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* also treats a common group: a collection of pilgrims takes turns telling stories along the route of their pilgrimage. Added to the setting is another feature of commonality. The "Prologue" to *The Canterbury Tales* introduces each of the pilgrims with an initial characterization which is then amplified, illumined, and frequently fundamentally reshaped during subsequent glimpses of each pilgrim.

Thus we may consider the unity of *Winesburg, Ohio*. The tales treat a common group: each of the grotesques has evolved through a desperate and unceasing adherence to one of the numberless

truths fabricated by the minds of men, and they are all confined within a geographical setting which Anderson uses in all of its various aspects, not only to explain their personalities, but to suggest the fact and sometimes the nature of their estrangement.

For example, the fact of emotional estrangement is symbolically reinforced by the fact of physical estrangement in many of the tales. In "Hands", Wing Biddlebaum is physically separated from the road by "... a long field that had been seeded for clover but had produced only a dense crop of yellow mustard weeds" (p. 27). But Wing Biddlebaum is also emotionally separated from the busy intercourse of life that the road, by its very nature, implies. He is a man in whom the seeds that had promised a fruitful and generative life have been choked out by the weeds of hatred and misunderstanding. Thus, the field that separates him from the road symbolically represents the sterility and emptiness inherent in withdrawal and removal from life's activities and productivity.

Seth Richardson in "The Thinker" is similarly situated in physical estrangement, for his home "... was in a little valley far out at the end of Main Street" (p. 128). The fact of his emotional isolation lies deep within himself, in a singular and undefined lack of motivation, purpose, or purposefulness that he recognizes and sometimes half-regrets, but which he makes no real attempt to change:

He wasn't particularly interested in what was going on, and sometimes wondered if he would ever be particularly interested in anything (p. 133).

And so, like Wing Biddlebaum, Seth Richardson watches life from his vantage point of the road, regretting "... that he also could not laugh boisterously, shout meaningless jokes and make of himself a figure in the endless stream of moving, giggling activity..." (p. 128).

In "Loneliness," the fact of physical isolation for Enoch Robinson foreshadows the world he ultimately creates for himself, a fantasy world peopled by imagined beings who respond with sensitivity and sympathy to the creativity that lies locked and inarticulate within him. Enoch Robinson's early isolation is a conscious rejection of the reality of the physical world:

Enoch Robinson was the son of Mrs. Al Robinson, who once owned a farm on a side road leading off Trunion Pike, east of Winesburg and two miles beyond the town limits. The farmhouse was painted brown and the blinds to all the windows facing the road were kept closed... Old citizens remembered him as a quiet, smiling youth inclined to silence. He walked in the middle of the road when he came into town and sometimes he read a book. Drivers of teams had to shout and swear to make him realize where he was so that he would turn out of the beaten track and let them pass (p. 167).

This conscious rejection leads ultimately to a complete closure of self, where he can find security, peace and importance behind the locked door of his room off Washington Square in New York, attended by "... the shadow people, invented by the childmind of Enoch Robinson, who lived in the room with him" (p. 173).

The perspective that is born of a sense of estrangement is often symbolically projected by the grotesque looking down on life from above. In "Mother," Elizabeth Willard sits in her room by a window that overlooks Main Street and thus vicariously partakes of the village life passing before her eyes, much as she, in her young girlhood, had vicariously experienced the larger world outside her immediate environment by walking in the dark village streets with the salesmen or travelers who registered at her father's hotel.

Conversely, the window of Dr. Reedy's room in "Paper Pills" suggests his apathetic withdrawal from life:

After his wife's death [he] sat all day in his empty office close by a window that was covered with cobwebs. He never opened the window. Once on a hot day in August he tried but found it stuck and after that he forgot all about it (p. 35).

A struggle against temptation and a paroxysm of self-doubt and perceived failing are focused through the window of Reverend Hartman's bell tower study in "The Strength of God." Reverend

Hartman, although earnest and conscientious, doubts the worth of his religious conviction and despairs of his corresponding inability to kindle the souls of his congregation. The battle is joined between the conflicting claims of transcending grace and mortal flesh, and the ultimate confrontation between spiritual and earthy concupiscence is vividly captured when, in a temporary succumbing to temptation, he breaks a hole in the lead panel of the window which illustrates Christ placing his hand upon the head of a child. The hole, which nips the heel of the young child gazing raptly into the eyes of Christ, suggests the Achilles' heel, failure of will and spirit, with which Reverend Hartman accuses himself.

Conversely, Anderson frequently uses garden images to suggest a yearning for the post-Edenic state of completeness that physical love appears to yield. Alice Hindman waits in vain for the return of Ned Currie, only to finally realize that life has passed her by:

... [T]he country about Winesbury is delightful. The town lies in the midst of open fields, but beyond the fields are pleasant patches of woodlands. In the wooded places are many little cloistered nooks, quiet places where lovers go to sit on Sunday afternoons ... For several years after Ned Currie went away Alice did not go into the wood with the other young people on Sunday, but one day after he had been gone for two or three years and when her loneliness seemed unbearable, she put on her best dress and set out. Finding a little sheltered place from which she could see the town and a long stretch of the fields, she sat down. Fear of age and ineffectuality took possession of her. She could not sit still, and arose. As she stood looking out over the land something, perhaps the thought of never ceasing life as it expresses itself in the flow of the seasons, fixed her mind on the passing years. With a shiver of dread, she realized that for her the beauty and freshness of youth had passed. For the first time she felt that she had been cheated. She did not blame Ned Currie and did not know what to blame. Sadness swept over her. Dropping to her knees, she tried to pray, but instead of prayers words of protest came to her lips. "It is not going to come to me. I will never find happiness. Why do I tell myself lies?" she cried, and an odd sense of relief came with this, her first bold attempt to face the fear that had become a part of her everyday life (pp. 116-117).

Louise Bently craves the affection and release from loneliness that physical love promises, and which she supposes will destroy the barrier between her and happiness. She waits with anguish for her lover's call from the orchard and after several evenings spent thus in vain "... was half beside herself with grief and decided that for her there was no way to break through the wall that had shut her off from the joy of life" (p. 94).

The idyllic honeymoon days of his marriage that Wash Williams depicts in "Respectability" are explicitly Edenic in nature, but they are also indicative of the ensuing fall and removal:

We went to Columbus in early March and as soon as the days became warm I went to work in the garden. With a spade I turned up the black ground while she ran about laughing and pretending to be afraid of the worms I uncovered. Late in April came the planting. In the little paths among the seed beds she stood holding a paper bag in her hand. The bag was filled with seeds. A few at a time she handed me the seeds that I might thrust them into the warm, soft ground (pp. 125-126).

Wash's bride, tainted with the corruption of knowledge, forces him from that garden of innocence when he is faced with the fact of her adultery, but it is a removal that is forever fraught with longing and the eventual hope of return and thereby to a state of completeness.

Natural imagery also frequently accompanies an awakening to the reality of self. David Bentley clearly senses the seeds of incipient power while engaged in his boyhood ramblings in the woods in "Godliness":

As he went about thoughts came to him. He realized that he was almost a man and wondered what he would do in life, but before they came to anything, the thoughts passed and he was a boy again. One day he killed a squirrel that sat on one of the lower branches of a tree and chattered at him. Home he ran with the squirrel in his

hand. One of the Bentley sisters cooked the little animal and he ate it with great gusto. The skin he tacked on a board and suspended the board by a string from his bedroom window (p. 98).

Just as Ray Pearson and Hal Winters experience a total sharing and realization of their common humanity in a "... big empty field with the quiet corn shocks standing in rows behind them and the red and yellow hills in the distance ..." (p. 205), George Willard and Helen White similarly share a moment of inarticulate, inexpressible recognition:

It was so they went down the hill. In the darkness they played like two splendid young things in a young world. Once, running swiftly forward, Helen tripped George and he fell. He squirmed and shouted. Shaking with laughter, he rolled down the hill. Helen ran after him. For just a moment she stopped in the darkness. There was no way of knowing what woman's thoughts went through her mind but, when the bottom of the hill was reached and she came up to the boy, she took his arm and walked beside him in dignified silence. For some reason they could not have explained they both got from their silent evening together the thing needed. Man or boy, woman or girl, they had for a moment taken hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible (pp. 242-43).

To continue to cite examples in like vein would be both redundant and unnecessary. It is clear that the collection of tales that constitutes *Winesburg, Ohio* is unified through the fact of setting: that even while each of the grotesques is bound by the larger physical environment, each is much more bound and defined by his or her personal and immediate environment. Each individual, Anderson implies, must transcend the personal isolation that all suffer to share in the common condition and spirit of humanity. To fail to do so is to deny self-realization and individual freedom, with an ultimate cost of emotional and mental paralysis.

—Susan Howard

Open Contest
Honorable Mention

HEDVIG: CHARACTER AS SYMBOL

The play, *The Wild Duck*, openly invites its audience to explore its theme for symbolic intent. It would appear that Ibsen meticulously spun the fibers of his characters onto a spool of symbolic relatedness and then wove them into an intricate pattern for our scrutiny. Despite Ibsen's repeated denials of such intent in his works, the parallels between the lives of the characters and that of the wild duck are far too striking to credit them to mere coincidence or "things to squabble about" as their author would suppose. Add to this a seemingly methodical exposition of the symbolic qualities of the duck by characters in the play as well as Ibsen's own repeated use of irony and foreshadowing involving these emerging symbols, and at least a gauze of allegorical texture would seem to appear. Even the title of the play would suggest observing it with the perspective of the wild duck in mind. Just who in the play is this wild duck? It might be more appropriate to ask, just who is *not* the wild duck. But of all the characters whose lives trace that of the duck's (and a case could probably be made for each one), it is Hedvig who emerges as the purest representative of the symbol.

What seems to make the wild duck so special is the very nature of its wildness. Unlike domesticated Muscovy ducks or the almost tame rabbits and show pigeons in the attic, the wild duck is born carefree to fly in open skies. Hjalmar uses this very imagery in describing his daughter to Gregers. But just as each wild duck must sometime cross the path of the hunter, Hedvig "... flutters towards the inevitable darkness" of her blindness.

The duck has already passed from its natural state of wildness at the hands of Hakon Werle (as

have most of the characters in the play). Once shot, it had been not-so-gently rescued by Werle's dog after plunging to the bottom of the sea. Old Ekdol, steeped in half-forgotten forest lore, indicates an almost willful act on the part of all injured wild ducks to "... bite themselves fast in the weeds" where they eventually drown. These weeds are revealed by Gregers to represent the illusions of life—Relling's prescription of "life-lies."

Hedvig sustains her share of such self-deception. She is compelled by her deep desire for the sincere love of her father. His claims of consuming devotion to his daughter give way to the realities of his thoughtless actions. When she is obviously heart-broken at his forgetting to bring her some delicacy from his feasting at the Werles, his initial reaction is that of indignation for being charged with neglect. It is his fear of being held accountable for her blindness that motivates his protective behaviour over the child. Only when Hedvig promises not to hold him responsible does he accept her offer to retouch the photographs so that he can attend to the wild duck. It is no wonder that Hedvig draws so closely to the bird. Since she, like the wild duck, is a totally innocent creature, she is not capable of jealousy and, therefore, seeks to attach herself emotionally to the object of her father's love.

Hedvig's strong attraction to the duck approaches the mystical. She is referred to by Relling as "little wild-duck mother" and is indeed insistent that the duck belongs exclusively to her. It is reasonable to think that she recognizes in the crippling wounds of the duck her own affliction of impending blindness. Just as the duck must never be allowed to "... catch sight of sea or sky," Hedvig too will soon be imprisoned in a world of darkness.

It is in the attic which Hedvig pictures to be "the depths of the sea" that she finds the solace of a kindred creature. Hedvig has been wounded both physically and emotionally and, like the wild duck, plunges into these depths of the sea for release from the torment of the reality of a broken and visionless existence. Just as she had allowed her imagination to soar at the sight of a romantic England pictured in the books left by the sea captain, the attic becomes, for her, a tangible place of escape. The undersea world of the attic which serves as hunting ground for grandfather Ekdol and inventing laboratory for her father also provides Hedvig with the "weeds of illusion" as she finds through the duck the love and devotion of a father that has been denied her.

But the similarity of Hedvig with the wild duck lies most notably in her innocent nature stressed throughout the play. For her, the nearly fatal wound comes through the act of open rejection by her father. She swears to her mother, "I shall die if he doesn't return." Like the wild duck, she must plunge into the depth of the sea just as her grandfather and father, and even Gregers had done before her. Just as the duck had instinctively attempted to end its life in the weeds, each of them had faced squarely the prospect of committing suicide rather than continuing to live a crippled existence. But each, in turn, choose to mask his ensuing life of pain with the weeds of illusions: the illusion of the recaptured glory of youth, of a destiny in life, of being a Messiah.

Gregers offers to Hedvig the choice of a life-lie as well as he tries to persuade her that her killing the wild duck would be a sign of great sacrifice. Hedvig possesses too great a natural sense for this, however, and sees the idea the next morning as being simply "queer." For her to kill the wild duck would be for her to deny herself--to defer responsibility just as the others had done. All that is left for Hedvig is to complete in herself what the wild duck had been prevented from doing: to end her life in the ultimate illusion of peace--death.

For a play to act effectively as allegory, its author must be willing to sacrifice what might be considered more natural character development for greater conformity to the intended symbol. The nature of wild ducks compelled Hedvig, once injured, to destroy herself. If Ibsen had truly not intended this play to have symbolic meaning, might we not justifiably wonder if he didn't indeed sacrifice this character in vain?

—Russell Sutcliffe

MYSTICISM AND THE PURITAN WRITER

Traditionally historians have cast the religious lives of the Puritans in the same dichochromatic tones as those of their adopted garb. The bleakness of black or grey and the starkness of white symbolizes much of how later generations learned to view those hardy folk who first established homes on hostile shores. To some extent, there is truth in this view. Of necessity, the Puritans were sober, hardworking, industrious, and rigidly pious. The hardships of the rude existence they struggled for exacted such traits, as did no less the religious ideals of the spiritual community they sought to establish. Neither surroundings nor circumstances in the early days of colonization afforded much opportunity for laughter, frivolity, or leisure. Yet the Puritans fall heir to a rich heritage of color and joy, inherent in the very tenets of their Calvinistic belief, which belies the austerity of their lives, and the grimness and exactness of their professed purpose, and which permeates much of their writing.

Seventeenth-century New English Puritans were Calvinists who believed that before the Fall, God operated under the covenant of works: that is man was saved if he obeyed the law of God. This covenant was destroyed by the disobedience of Adam and Eve. God then instituted the covenant of grace: that is, salvation was achieved through faith in Christ, who by His passive and active obedience, purchased for certain souls (the elect) freedom from the judgment of original sin. Election was not available to all, but to only a few, and like the covenants, was instituted by God before the Creation. Thus, since it could not be earned but was a free and predetermined gift, the only way that it could be claimed was through inner experience and outer manifestation:

The paramount question in the mind of every New England Puritan was, "Am I one of the elect?" The decision to lead a life of outward holiness was taken to be evidence of election; but genuine assurance could come only from within . . . After 1640 a Congregationalist was not admitted to full church membership until he was able to satisfy the brethren that he had had a genuine experience of the operation of saving grace in his heart. Usually, he was required to make a public statement in a church meeting . . . The experience of the 'comfortable' working of grace was supposed to be recurrent . . .¹

The assurance of election thus came through self-examination and self-revelation, and was accomplished through prayer, meditation, and contemplation—devotions fundamentally indistinguishable in New England from their practice in medieval Europe and the primitive Christian church. Such intense inner concentration and the subsequent vitality, energy, and richness that imbues the spiritual life are unmistakable components of mysticism:

The founders of mysticism, including Denis (or Dionysius) the Areopagite (fifth or early sixth century) and St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1096-1141), proceed from the principle that God in his infinity is totally beyond the human intellect. Nevertheless, through the discipline of humility, compassion, and, finally, utter surrender to contemplation, one may arise to a sense of participation or union with God. The true quality of this experience is incommunicable, yet the mystic is able to describe the various stages of the 'way' and, by analogy to sensory experience such as sweetness, warmth and joy, convey after a fashion the nature of the inner goal he seeks.²

This mystical process, or the "mystic way," involves four steps. The first step is the awakening, or a sudden consciousness of the divine reality. The second step, purgation evolves naturally from the first, for with a recognition of the perfection of the divine reality, man comes into an understanding of his own imperfection and finiteness and embarks upon a process of purgation and purification by attempting to remove himself from the stigma of sin through denial of carnality and worldliness. The third step, rapture, is a reward resulting from the disciplines of the preceding two steps, for the soul awakens to a vision that is the mirror or image of God to it, and which is expressed through a consciousness of God's incomparable beauty and desirability. The fourth step is the mystical union of the searcher with the divine reality, and may be expressed in literary terms as deification or as the mystical marriage between Christ and His church.³

Because metaphysical poetry lends itself readily to mysticism by employing unusual images which sensuously convey the mystical property, Edward Taylor is perhaps the finest and first ex-

ample of the mystical Puritan poet. Both mundane and exalted images are used by Taylor to explore the mystic way. The following examples have been taken from "Meditation 42 (First Series)," which was drawn from Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."

The first step, the awakening, (L1-7), is implied through sensual images that entice, evoke, and stir the appetite into longing: "Apples of gold, in silver pictures shrined" (L1) and "loveliness in lumps, tuned, and enrined/ In jasper cask" (L3-4). The second stanza portrays an awareness of his state of sin and lack of grace in terms more immediate and earthy. He likens himself to a rusty lock:

Sin rusts my lock all o'er.
Though he ten thousand keys all on a string,
Takes out, scarce one is found unlocks the door (L8-10).
Thus, he embarks on a process of purgation and purification.
Lord, ope the door: rub off my rust, remove
My sin, and oil my lock. (Dust there doth shelf) (L13-14).

The earthy image is replaced by rapture in vivid and glowing terms as Taylor describes the desirability of the reward to the elect in a state of grace:

My love in rich attire shall on my King
Attend, and honor on Him well bestow.
In glory He prepares for His a place
Whom He doth all beglory here with grace.
He takes them to the shining threshhold clear
Of His bright palace, clothed in grace's flame.
Then takes them in thereto, not only there
To have a prospect, but possess the same.
The crown of life, the throne of glory's place.
The father's house blanched o'er with orient grace (L21-30).

And finally, he infers the last step, the glory of the union of the elect with God which occurs upon the soul's triumphant entry into its rightful home:

Canaan in gold print enwalled with gems:
A kingdom rimmed with glory round: in fine
A glorious crown paled thick with all the stems
Of grace, and of all properties divine.
How happy wilt Thou make me when these shall
As a blest heritage unto me fall? (L31-36).

Although Anne Bradstreet does not employ the exotic imagery that Edward Taylor so vividly uses, her portrayal of the mystic process is no less effective and in fact may be made more effective because of the immediacy of her images to the common experience. The Puritan mind was accustomed to seeing the presence of God in and through all things, and Bradstreet's poetry is no exception. The awakening of the soul to the divine reality through the transcending power of nature is a recurrent theme throughout her work:

I wist not what to wish, yet sure thought I,
If so much excellence abide below,
How excellent is He that dwells on high
Whose power and beauty by his works we know?
Sure he is goodness, wisdom, glory, light
That hath this under world so richly dight;
More heaven than earth was here, no winter and no night ("Contemplations," L8-14).

The use of traditional Christian symbolism also makes Bradstreet's poetry more accessible than that of Taylor's, as in the following example, where the river is synonymous with rebirth and equates dedication or purification in the mystic process:

Under the cooling shadow of a stately elm
Close sat I by a goodly river's side,
Where gliding streams the rocks did overwhelm,
A lonely place, with pleasures dignified.
I once that loved the shady woods so well,
Now thought the rivers did the trees excel,
And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell ("Contemplations," L141-147).

Bradstreet perhaps come closest to Taylor's ecstatic imagery when she touches upon the soul's

longing for its eternal home and the perfection of God:

Mine eye doth pierce the heavens and see
What is invisible to thee.
My garments are not silk nor gold,
Nor such like trash which earth doth hold,
But royal robes I shall have on,
More glorious than the glist'ring sun,
My crown not diamonds, pearls and gold,
But such as angels' heads enfold.
The city where I hope to dwell,
There's none on earth can parallel;
The stately walls both high and strong,
Are made of precious jasper stone;
The gates of pearl, both rich and clear,
And angels are for porters there;
The streets thereof transparent gold,
Such as no eye did e'er behold;
A crystal river there doth run,
Which doth proceed from the Lamb's throne.
Of life, there are the waters sure,
Which shall remain forever pure,
Nor sun, nor moon, they have no need,
For glory doth from God proceed ("The Flesh and the Spirit," L77-98).

Her clear, unambiguous and fundamental references to the mystical union illustrate a firm reliance upon the assurances made by God to the elect through His Word as well as a thorough understanding of the concept of the mystical way:

What though my flesh shall there consume,
It is the bed that Christ did perfume,
And when a few years shall be gone,
This mortal shall be clothed upon.
A corrupt carcass down it lays,
A glorious body it shall rise.
In weakness and dishonour sown,
In power 'tis raised by Christ alone.
Then soul and body shall unite
And of their Maker have the sight.
Such lasting joys shall there behold
As ear ne'er heard nor tongue e'er told.
Lord make me ready for that day,

Then come, dear Bridegroom, come away ("As Weary Pilgrim," L31-44).

Religious prose was not immune to the effects of religious ecstasy, and the joy and warmth that often transcend such works in the relating of the experience not only reaffirms the genuineness of the experience, but the sincerity of the believer. An illustration may be readily drawn from Jonathan Edwards' "Personal Narrative." Nothing can be a more explicitly intimate recounting of the unfolding of a mystic process than this essay. There is the awakening:

The first that I remember that ever I found anything of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, 1 Timothy 1.17, "Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being, a new sense, quite different from anything I ever experienced before. Never any words of scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, now excellent a being that was, and how happy I should be if I might enjoy that God and be rapt up to God in Heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in Him. I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of scripture to myself; and went to prayer to pray to God that I might enjoy Him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought that there was anything spiritual or of a saving nature in this.

There is the natural evolution from awakening to the conviction of sin and the embarkation upon a process of purgation and purification:

I sought an increase of grace and holiness, and that I might live an holy life with vastly more earnestness than ever I sought grace, before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means how I should live holily with far greater diligence and earnestness than ever I pursued anything in my life . . . My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way, and the innumerable and bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit that there was in my heart.

There follows the soul's growing recognition of the beauty and desirability of the godhead, and the yearning for union:

Since I came to this town, I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of His glorious perfections and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me a glorious and lovely Being, chiefly on the account of His holiness. The holiness of God had always appeared to me the most lovely of all His attributes. The doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty and free grace in showing mercy to whom He would show mercy, and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me as great part of His glory. It has often been sweet to me to go to God and adore Him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of Him.

And finally there is the culmination of mystical union, for Edwards, as for many Puritans, a recurrent and anticipated event:

Once, as I rid out into the woods for my health . . . to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as mediator between God and man, and His wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared to me so calm and sweet, appeared great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception, which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour, which kept me, the bigger part of the time, in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt withal an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, than to be emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love Him with a holy and pure love; to trust in Him; to live upon Him; to serve and follow Him; and to be totally wrapt up in the fullness of Christ; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure with a divine and heavenly purity. I have several other times had views very much of the same nature and that have had the same effects.

Although admittedly the foregoing examples reflect only a small proportion of Puritan writers, it should be noted that despite their widely disparate backgrounds, styles and ranges of social experience, the similarities between them in religious experience are as marked as are the dissimilarities in personality. It must also be remembered that the artists of any given age reflect not only their personal concerns, but the concerns of their contemporaries and the issues of their cultural and social environment. Thus, it may safely be concluded that religious ecstasy was an important part of the Puritan way of life. The vividness, vitality and sincerity with which it is discussed and the warmth and fullness of its expression make an irrefutable statement about the meaning, quality, and value of the Puritan religious belief. Religion was not cold, stark, and comfortless; no did it reflect an existence devoid of color, spontaneity, and excitement. It was a very real and meaningful force in the Puritan life frame.

—Susan Howard

¹Donald E. Stanford, *Edward Taylor* (Minn: Univ. of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, No. 52, 1965), p.15.

²Robert W. Ackerman, *Backgrounds to Medieval English Literature* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 87.

³Norman S. Grabo, *Edward Taylor*. In "The Contemplative Life." (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1961), pp. 40-43.

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